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SECRETLY INFORMATION

D/I USAF CONTRIBUTION TO NIE-61:
CONSEQUENCES OF COMMUNIST CONTROL OVER THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT

I. How are Western Capabilities Affected By The Fact That the Indian Subcontinent Is Not Under Communist Control ?

A. Military

1. What is the present strength and combat effectiveness of the ground, air, and naval forces of the subcontinent ?

The current air order of battle estimates for the Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Royal Pakistan Air Force (RPAF) are shown on the tables attached as Annex I: At present Ceylon has no air force.

a. Indian Air Force

Of the indigenous air forces of South and Southeast Asia the IAF is considered to have the most significant combat capability. Excluding training type aircraft, the IAF has 165 aircraft assigned to tactical units: 78 of these aircraft are piston-type fighters and 20 are jet fighters. In addition India possesses 182 aircraft that could be made operational. These aircraft include approximately 100 piston-type fighters and 22 jet fighters. The mission of the IAF is primarily one of air support for the Indian Army; however, in case of hostile air attack, this air-support mission would probably be subordinated to air-defense efforts. Six fighter-bomber squadrons, which are based generally in northern and central

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India, are each equipped with twelve Tempests or Spitfires. Two squadrons, based at New Delhi, are equipped with Vampire III jet fighters. In addition, India has two light bomber squadrons, two transport squadrons, and several reconnaissance units. The IAF is organized along RAF lines. Attached to the IAF, as administrative and technical advisors, are capable RAF personnel. India has one aircraft factory presently engaged in the production of a primary-training type aircraft and the major overhaul of military and civil aircraft. This company as yet is not capable of producing combat type equipment. For support of the IAF, India is dependent upon foreign sources for the supply of combat and transport type aircraft, aircraft munitions, armament, and aviation fuel. The IAF is considered capable of delaying action but without foreign support, is not considered capable of sustained operation against a large-scale air offensive by a major power.

b. Royal Pakistan Air Force

Excluding training aircraft, the RPAF has 62 aircraft assigned to tactical units. Forty-two of these aircraft are piston-type fighters. In addition, Pakistan possesses 92 aircraft that could be made operational. These aircraft include 52 piston-type fighters and 13 jet fighters. The primary mission of the RPAF is support of the Pakistan Army; however, in the event of hostile air attack, this mission would be subordinated to air defense. Three fighter-bomber squadrons, usually based at Peshawar and Karachi, are each equipped with twelve Fury aircraft; a fourth squadron, operating at Karachi in limited strength, is also equipped with Furies.

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The RPAF now has thirteen Vickers Attacker jet fighters which are not assigned to operational units. In addition, there is a transport squadron and a light bomber squadron. The RPAF is critically short of pilots, having less than 150. A pilot-training program, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] may relieve this shortage somewhat. As in the case of the IAF, the RPAF is organized along RAF lines and is advised by RAF personnel. Although there is no aircraft factory in Pakistan, there is one depot capable of assembly, repair, major overhaul, and modification of air frames and engines. Pakistan is entirely dependent on foreign sources for all aircraft, spare parts, munitions, armament, and aviation fuel. Against a large-scale air offensive by a major power, the maximum combat capability of the RPAF could be only a delaying action until foreign assistance could be obtained. Without such aid, the RPAF would rapidly collapse.

2. In a military sense, to what extent does the subcontinent serve as a deterrent to Communist expansion in Southeast Asia? the Middle East?

Considering the present military air capabilities of India and Pakistan only, the subcontinent cannot be considered as a deterrent to Communist expansion in Southeast Asia. The military air forces of the subcontinent are not capable of sustained combat operations without considerable assistance from foreign sources. To oppose effectively a significant hostile air power, such as the CCAF, the present combat capabilities of the air forces of India and Pakistan would have to be substantially increased. This would necessarily be a long-term project. Should Communist aggression

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in Southeast Asia take the form of a military invasion of Burma by Chinese Communist forces, it is believed that India and Pakistan would wish to send military assistance to Burma, but only in conjunction with other members of the United Nations.

As with Southeast Asia, the present military air capability of the subcontinent cannot be considered a deterrent to Communist aggression in the Middle East. In the case of overt Communist aggression in the Middle East, the governments of the subcontinent would be gravely concerned for reasons of geographical proximity and economic, cultural, and religious ties. It is possible, and in the event of a Communist invasion of Afghanistan probable, that military assistance for the subcontinent would be requested from the West. However, appreciable strengthening of the subcontinent military air capability would require considerable time.

It is believed that the present military capability of the subcontinent armed forces does act as a deterrent to Communist military expansion from Tibet into Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, Kashmir, or Assam. The absence of rail, adequate road and air facilities from West China into Tibet have hindered the Chinese Communist consolidation and expansion of Tibet as a military base. Less than 15,000 Communists troops are now deployed in Tibet. Present air facilities in Tibet are not considered adequate to support by air a Chinese Communist invasion of the Indian subcontinent from Tibet. The inadequacy of routes and the difficult terrain to be encountered from Tibet into the subcontinent would limit the mobility as well as logistic support of an invading force. Air facilities on the subcontinent

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are adequate and so spaced to allow for the disposition of air units to oppose any force invading the subcontinent. The armed forces of either India or Pakistan are considered to possess the strength and mobility to successfully defend the northern boundaries of the subcontinent against any attempted invasion that the communists are presently capable of undertaking from Tibet.

3. In what ways and to what extent would a non-Communist subcontinent affect the military position of the West in a global conflict with the USSR if it remained non-Communist and neutral? if it remained non-Communist and joined the Western Powers?

The military importance of the Indian subcontinent to the West, in the event of a global conflict with the USSR, would be based primarily on the following factors. (1) The location in the Indian Ocean of the subcontinent from which air power might be employed to control its sea lanes and the adjacent land areas. (2) The location of the subcontinent with respect to Central Asia, the Persian Gulf, and Southeast Asia. From medium and heavy bomber bases in India and Pakistan, important industrial, urban, and governmental centers of the USSR, and interior China, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia can be reached. (3) The large number of excellent airfields and the communications net - sea, rail, road, and air - which make the subcontinent a potential base of operations for a full-scale air war directed against the USSR. (4) The availability of the Indian and Pakistan air forces which, with additional equipment and training, might contribute

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substantially to the defense of the subcontinent. (5) The availability of personnel capable of contributing minor technical skills, especially in fields auxiliary to a modern military effort.

Should the subcontinent remain non-Communist and neutral in a global conflict, the West would certainly be denied the use of subcontinent bases for air operations against the USSR. Air transit rights for military purposes across the subcontinent would most probably also be denied. This would severely curtail, if not sever completely, Western air lines of communication between Europe and the Far East.

If, on the other hand, the governments of the subcontinent joined the Western powers in a global conflict, the West would be provided with a strategically located base for large-scale air operations against the Soviet bloc. Further, the West would control probably the most important communications link between Europe and the Far East, a significant consideration in the event of a global war.

II. How Would Soviet Bloc Capabilities Be Affected If The Indian Subcontinent Came Under Communist Control ?

A. Military

1. What effects (as distinguished from the denial factors to the West as discussed in Section I-A) would a Communist subcontinent have on over-all Soviet bloc military capabilities ?
 - a. Under Communist control, how would present subcontinent military forces affect Soviet bloc capabilities for:

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(1) Offensive operations against the Middle East and
and the Far East ?

Present subcontinent military air forces have virtually no offensive air capabilities against either the Middle East or the Far East. However, these forces, operating in conjunction with Soviet bloc air forces and utilizing the extensive air facilities of India, Pakistan, and Ceylon, could control the air, land, and sea routes within range of their aircraft; and they could also carry out tactical air operations against the Middle East and Southeast Asia. The biggest contribution to Soviet bloc air capabilities would be the many airfields in the subcontinent.

(2) Interfering with Western communications.

Other than under the conditions outlined, and outside of operations by the Indian Air Force's thirty-four B-24 light bombers, present subcontinent air forces have little capability to interfere with Western communications except on the subcontinent itself. If the Western Powers attempted to establish bases in Communist-controlled India, Pakistan, and Ceylon, the subcontinent military forces could tie down considerable Western forces to guard bases, installations, and lines of communication and to defend them against air attack. Whereas denial of facilities (discussed in Section I-A) would be passive assistance to the Soviet bloc, the military actions outlined would be active assistance. Soviet bloc capabilities would be increased by the extent to which Western forces were engaged, and therefore unavailable for service elsewhere. However, Soviet bloc capabilities

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would be most enhanced by subcontinent support of bases for air operations against Western logistical installations and lines of communication in Southeast Asia, the Middle East, the Bay of Bengal, the Arabian Sea, and the Indian Ocean. The extent of interference with Western communications would depend on the numbers and types of aircraft employed by the Soviet bloc air units deployed in the subcontinent.

- b. To what extent could these subcontinent capabilities be increased without materiel assistance from the Soviet bloc?

Present subcontinent military air capabilities could not be increased to any great extent without assistance. The countries of the subcontinent are not highly industrialized. They are presently capable of manufacturing small arms, infantry weapons such as machine guns, mortars, and light field pieces, and the ammunition for them. To produce heavier arms and equipment would require more plants, machinery, and technical knowledge than the peoples of the subcontinent now have. Their aircraft industry is small and is presently capable of producing little more than conventional-type trainers and other light airplanes. It could, however, with some assistance, be readily adapted for the partial construction, assembly, maintenance, and repair of all types of combat aircraft. Not only would the military air forces of the subcontinent require considerable assistance in materiel, but they would also require advisory and technological assistance to increase their capabilities.

- c. To what extent would the Soviet bloc be able and likely to increase subcontinent military capabilities? Consideration should be given to such factors as:

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- (1) Probable Soviet policy with regard to building a strong military power on the subcontinent.

Since the ultimate goal of the Soviet planners is world-wide Communist domination directed from the Kremlin, the creation of a strong military power on the subcontinent would probably not be in accordance with Soviet policy. Such a power would tend to become independent of Moscow. About all the military strength that the USSR would want would be military forces capable of maintaining the Communist regime and of some measure of defense of the subcontinent, but dependent on the Soviet Union for materiel, for advisory and technical assistance, and for support in the event of a major invasion.

- (2) Present Soviet commitments.

Present Soviet commitments in the European Satellites, Red China, and Korea, as well as for modernizing and re-equipping the military aviation of the USSR, probably preclude furnishing, in addition, appreciable quantities of modern aircraft and related equipment to the subcontinent air forces. Although the Soviets have emphasized production of military materiel, it is doubted that much modern equipment could be made available to increase subcontinent military air capabilities unless the Soviets reduced their present commitments. This is considered unlikely, as the Soviet planners are undoubtedly proceeding according to priorities that they believe to be most urgent.

- (3) Availability in the Soviet bloc of the necessary technical and materiel resources?

It is doubted that the Soviet bloc has enough people who are both technically qualified and politically reliable to furnish the

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personnel required for major development of subcontinent military air capabilities without reduction of present commitments. If the Soviet bloc did attempt to develop these capabilities, it would probably follow the same pattern that the USSR employed, and is still pursuing, in Communist China and North Korea; that is, to send into the country officers, officials, engineers, technicians, and specialists to exploit the manpower, resources, and industries of the area. The Soviet bloc does have quantities of obsolete and obsolescent aircraft, as well as weapons and equipment, that could be given to the subcontinent air forces. This supply of material could be increased as the re-equipment program in the Soviet bloc replaces out-moded items with modern equipment. Although this materiel is neither new nor modern, it would considerably increase the air capabilities of the subcontinent. However, the subcontinent is entirely dependent on outside sources for aviation POL. The most feasible transportation for POL is by ocean tankers, which are not now available to the Soviet bloc in sufficient numbers for this purpose.

(4) Problems of transportation and communications.

The only land routes leading into the Indian subcontinent are primitive roads and trails through difficult mountainous or desert terrain. The only railroad is from Zahidan, Iran, to Quetta, Pakistan. The most feasible routes are two roads through Afghanistan and one through eastern Iran. The eastern Afghan route, via the Khyber pass, is through such rugged terrain that it has little capacity. The other two routes would require so much time and so much effort to develop that it would be more practical for the Soviet bloc to use ocean shipping

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and aerial transport to the fullest extent for the transportation of
materiel and personnel to develop the subcontinent's military capabilities.

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